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US Policy

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part (X) In Full

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Date Declassify on Reason

Argentine Human Rights Situation: Talking Points

- The United States recognizes that Argentina has been the victim of a brutal terrorist onslaught which sought to destroy society.

- The first major victory of the terrorists probably came when the legal system found itself unable to cope with the situation due to the intimidation of judges.

- The terrorists scored another victory when Argentina's political institutions failed to produce leadership and the military took over to avert economic and political chaos.

- After a year in power, the Argentine government has made astonishing progress, breaking the back of terrorism and salvaging the economy.

- We are fearful, however, that the terrorists are on the verge of two further victories:
 - (1) They appear to be succeeding in polarizing the Argentine military between so-called duros and moderates. If this is so and a hard-line approach wins out, Argentine society could be split as the terrorists want.

 - (2) Inasmuch as they are able to provoke counter-terrorist excesses, they will succeed in driving a wedge between the United States, the West and Argentina.

- The question arises, why does the United States care so much about Argentina? Why don't we concentrate

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our human rights efforts on countries such as Uganda, Cambodia and Cuba? There are a number of reasons, among them:

(1) Western values are at stake in Argentina.

(2) In a sense, Argentina is on the front line of the Western world, having to deal with terrorism and find ways to confront it for the rest of the world.

(3) Argentina's handling of the situation will have a lasting effect on this hemisphere.

- You wanted my thoughts on what Argentina might do. It is perhaps presumptuous for a non-Argentine to try to offer advice but as one friend speaking to another, I'll mention a few thoughts.
- I think it is fair to say that my government believes it essential for Argentina to start to wage the peace or risk losing the war. How?
- It seems to me that the government must recognize its unquestioned strength and gamble dramatically on the side of peace, seeking the help of the citizenry.
- The impression that the enemies of the government seek to convey that the Argentine government is not in full control of the situation must be corrected. There should not be unexplained disappearances attributed to mysterious right-wing forces.
- Arrests should not be made in the middle of the night by soldiers dressed in civilian clothes.
- Families should be notified of arrests.
- The government should acknowledge the names of all those that are being held and announce the charges against them.
- Detention procedures should be regularized with provisions made for legal defense and steps taken to assure the protection of judges and lawyers.

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- Abuses such as torture and the summary execution of prisoners should be punished.
 - Military camps should not be prisons.
 - The constitutional "right of option" which allows Argentine citizens to leave the country rather than being held without charges by the executive power should be reinstated. This would be an important step.
 - In short, the legal protections afforded by the Argentine Constitution should be guaranteed by the Argentine Armed Forces.
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- We both know that military men are men of honor and of high ideals. I want my countrymen to respect the Argentine Armed Forces and learn that you are restoring Western laws and ideals that so many have given up for lost in Argentina.

Drafted: ARA/ECA: FERondon:jc
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Concurrence: ARA/ECA - Mr. Zimmermann
ARA - Mr. Bray

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